

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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Eastern Idaho Teens Respond Positively To Learning Table Etiquette

The Situation

Family meal time facilitates one of the basic functions of the family, supplying family members with adequate food to meet the demands of their growing bodies. In addition to eating, family meal time provides opportunities for social development of the children and symbolizes family unity. However, as children age and families get busier, fewer families are eating together on a daily basis. In a Harvard study, approximately 17% of more than 16,000 children ate dinner with members of their family never or some days, 40% on most days, and only 43% ate dinner daily with members of their family. With fewer meals together, opportunities are lost for parents to teach table manners.

When students encounter social situations with meals, such as going on their first formal dinner-dance, dining during a job interview, or meeting the parents of special friends, they may lack the knowledge and skills of basic table manners. Their lack of knowledge and skill in the area of table manners has prompted many colleges and universities to provide refresher courses in table etiquette as part of their training for careers. Possessing a working knowledge of table etiquette can advance both careers and relationships. Opinions are formed by employers or business associates about potential employees based upon the skill at which they navigate their way through a business luncheon or dinner. During these situations, good table manners should be second nature so the focus

can be on the business negotiations rather than on which piece of silverware to use next.

Our Response

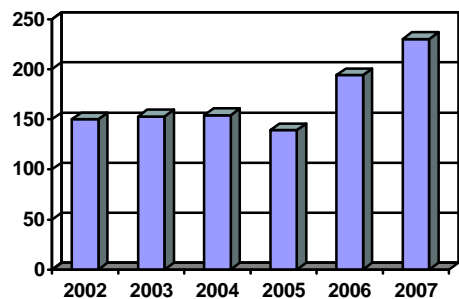
In response to concerns of Family and Consumer Sciences high school teachers in our area, the University of Idaho Extension Educators developed a program to teach youth table etiquette. *Manner Mishaps* focuses on table etiquette for a target audience of teenagers, using an interactive method so table manner skills can be both understood and applied. Through the use of fun activities, the students can quickly learn a skill they will use the rest of their lives in relationship and work situations.

Through the use of PowerPoint® slides, the students learn how to set a table properly by adding one piece of tableware at a time. With demonstration and personal examples the students learn which piece of silverware to use for each part of the meal, how to eat different types of food and the proper use of a napkin. In a humorous way the video, *Etiquette Hotline* illustrates poor table etiquette and allows students to become aware of their own appearance when dining. A game similar to Jeopardy® is an interactive opportunity to reinforce the material, and allows the instructor to determine if the information was understood and assimilated.

Program Growth

Since the program was developed in 2002, there has been consistent student participation.

Figure 1. Number of Participants



Program Outcomes

Evaluation methods included a 10 question test administered at the beginning and at the end of the program. The difference in scores on the pre-test and post-tests indicates changes in knowledge during the class presentation.

The average score on the pre-test was 65.9% correct and the average score on the post-test was 95% correct which indicates an increase in knowledge gained of 29%. The 99% correct responses in the Jeopardy® game also confirms an understanding of the concepts and skills taught.

At the conclusion of the class students completed a questionnaire measuring their attitudes and predicted behavior change. Results of the survey indicate:

- 97% agreed or strongly agreed that participating in the program would be helpful in their future.
- 97% agreed or strongly agreed that the program was interesting.
- 98% agreed or strongly agreed that the activities were helpful.
- 56% learned how to set a table and 28% were already setting it properly.
- 65% learned what each piece of silverware is used for and 23% were already using silverware properly.
- 55% learned what to do with the napkin and 32% indicated they were already using a napkin correctly.

For More Information

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